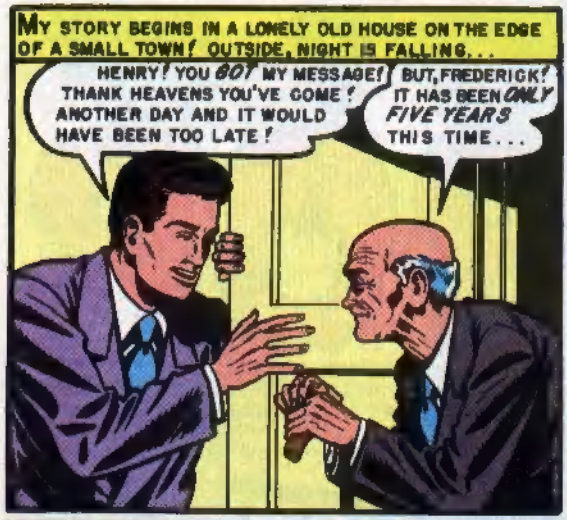
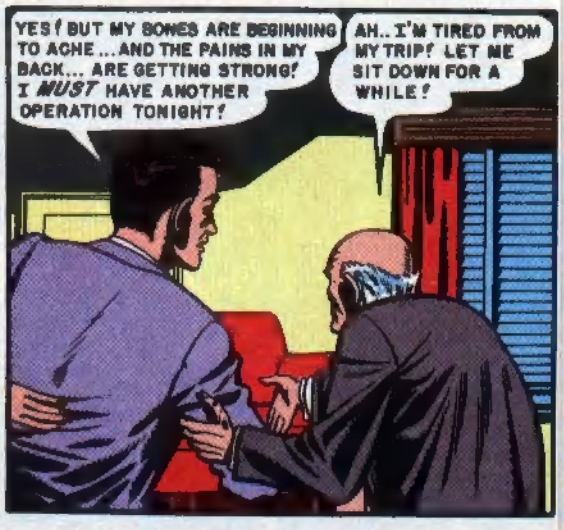
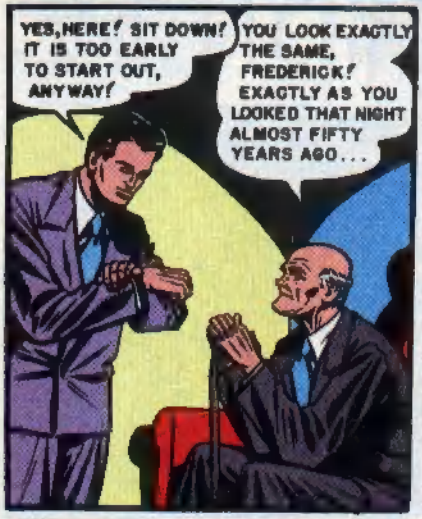
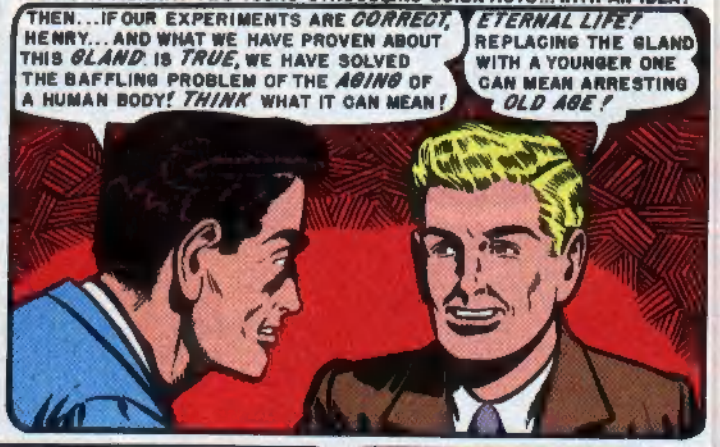
THE CRYPT OF TERROR


MY STORY BEGINS IN A LONELY OLD HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF A SMALL TOWN! OUTSIDE, NIGHT IS FALLING...
HENRY! YOU GOT MY MESSAGE! THANK HEAVENS YOU'VE COME! ANOTHER DAY AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO LATE!
BUT, FREDERICK! IT HAS BEEN ONLY FIVE YEARS THIS TIME...


YES! BUT MY BONES ARE BEGINNING TO ACHE...AND THE PAINS IN MY BACK... ARE GETTING STRONG! I MUST HAVE ANOTHER OPERATION TONIGHT!
AH.. I'M TIRED FROM MY TRIP! LET ME SIT DOWN FOR A WHILE!


YES, HERE! SIT DOWN! IT IS TOO EARLY TO START OUT, ANYWAY!
YOU LOOK EXACTLY THE SAME, FREDERICK! EXACTLY AS YOU LOOKED THAT NIGHT ALMOST FIFTY YEARS AGO...


I REMEMBER IT AS THOUGH IT WERE YESTERDAY! WE WERE BOTH TWENTY-FIVE! YOUNG...AMBITIOUS...FULL OF LIFE! REMEMBER? IT WAS IN VIENNA! TWO YOUNG STRUGGLING SCIENTISTS...WITH AN IDEA!"
THEN...IF OUR EXPERIMENTS ARE CORRECT, HENRY...AND WHAT WE HAVE PROVEN ABOUT THIS GLAND IS TRUE, WE HAVE SOLVED THE BAFFLING PROBLEM OF THE AGING OF A HUMAN BODY! THINK WHAT IT CAN MEAN!
ETERNAL LIFE! REPLACING THE GLAND WITH A YOUNGER ONE CAN MEAN ARRESTING OLD AGE!

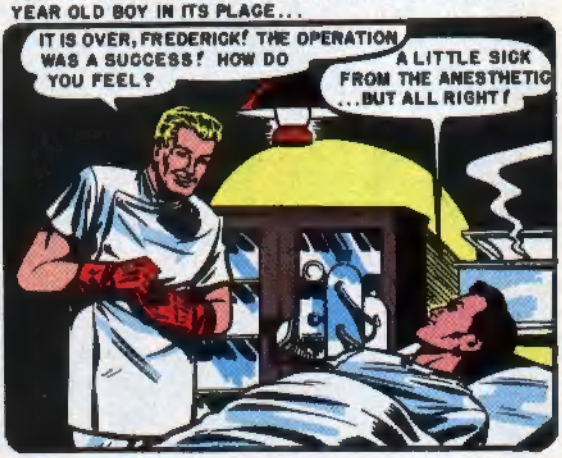
WE MUST PROVE IT, HENRY! WE MUST TRY IT..ON OURSELVES!
NO...COUNT ME OUT, FREDERICK. I DO NOT WANT ETERNAL LIFE! I WANT TO GROW OLD AND DIE WHEN MY TIME COMES!

YOU'RE A FOOL, HENRY! THINK OF IT! YOU CAN LOOK AS YOU LOOK TODAY ...FIFTY...A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW! I WANT IT, EVEN IF YOU DON'T! YOU WILL PERFORM THE OPERATION ON ME? WE OWE IT TO SCIENCE...TO THE WORLD!

AS YOU WISH, FREDERICK! BUT WHERE CAN WE GET A YOUNG GLAND? WHERE WILL WE FIND ONE?
HERE! IN THIS PAPER! LOOK!

AH, YES, FREDERICK... I REMEMBER WELL! THE PAPER TOLD OF A YOUNG COLLEGE STUDENT'S UNTIMELY DEATH! OUR EXPERIMENTS HAD PROVEN THAT THE GLAND REMAINED ACTIVE AFTER SUDDEN DEATH FOR 48 HOURS! THAT NIGHT, WE WENT TO THE CEMETERY AND EXHUMED THE STILL-WARM CORPSE...

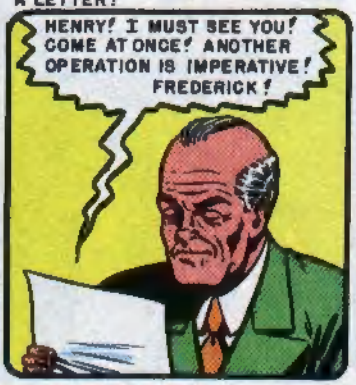
AND IN THE EARLY HOURS OF THAT MORNING, I REMOVED YOUR GLAND... AND SUBSTITUTED THAT OF AN EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD BOY IN ITS PLACE...



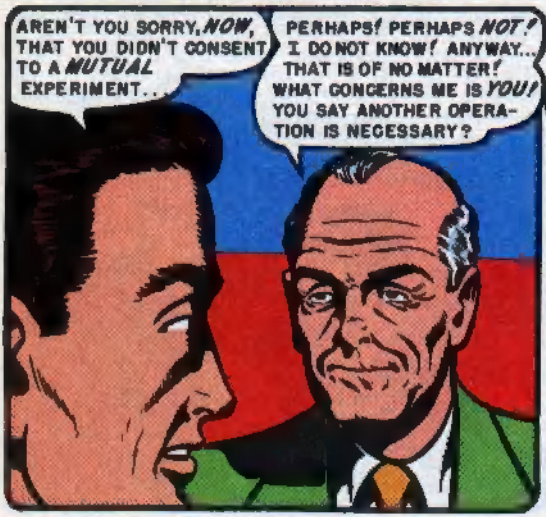
"THAT WAS *FIFTY YEARS* AGO! TWENTY YEARS LATER, I WAS OVER *FORTY FIVE*... YOU SENT FOR ME! WHAT A SHOCK TO SEE YOU... STILL YOUNG... STILL FULL OF YOUTH!"

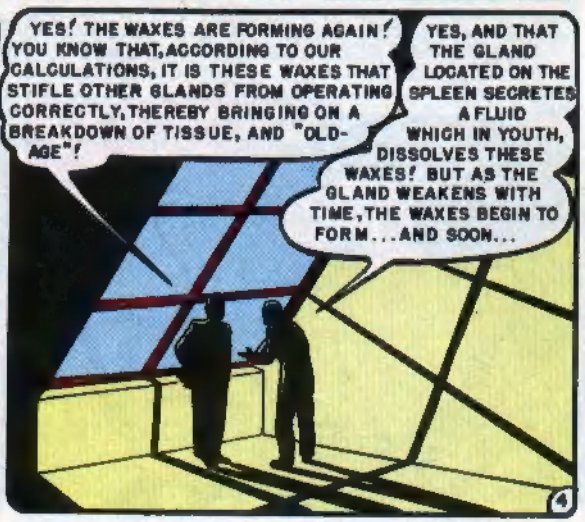
AND AGAIN I PERFORMED THE OPERATION ...SUCESSFULLY! THE YOUTH WAS A GOOD SPECIMEN...NINETEEN! HE HAD BEEN HIT BY A TRUCK...BUT THE GLAND WAS UNINJURED...

THEN YOU WENT TO AMERICA...AND SHORTLY AFTER, AN OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED ITSELF, AND I FOLLOWED! ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER THE SECOND OPERATION... I RECEIVED A LETTER!



AT FIRST, I DID NOT WANT TO GO! I WAS ALMOST *SIXTY!* WHAT WOULD I FIND? THE SAME YOUNG, HANDSOME BOY I HAD KNOWN THIRTY-FIVE YEARS BEFORE? BUT, MY SCIENTIFIC CURIOSITY GOT THE BETTER OF ME, AND I CAME!"

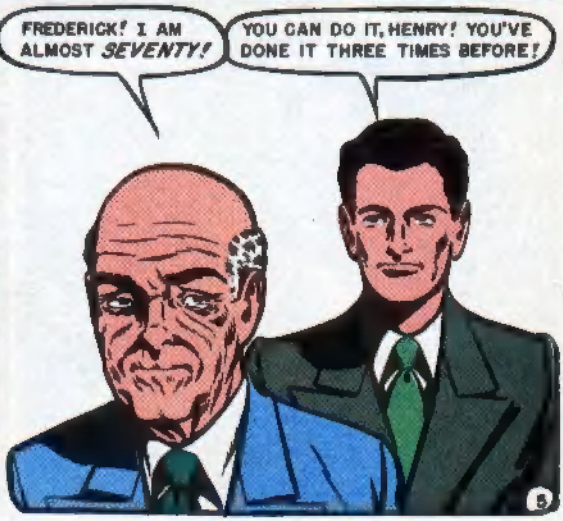




"AND SO, FOR THE THIRD TIME, WE WENT TO A CEMETERY...REMOVED THE BODY...

"...AND I PERFORMED ANOTHER OPERATION! THIS TIME, IT WAS A TWENTY-TWO YEAR OLD MAN! HE HAD BEEN KILLED IN A BRAWL...

"AFTER YOUR RECOVERY, THE CONVERSATION ABOUT PUBLISHING A REPORT WAS FORGOTTEN...AND I WENT AWAY! BUT *TEN YEARS LATER* YOU SENT FOR ME AGAIN!"



"AND SO, FOR THE FOURTH TIME IN FORTY-FIVE YEARS, WE WENT AGAIN TO A CEMETERY AND REMOVED A BODY NOT YET COLD IN DEATH...

I CANNOT HELP YOU, FREDERICK! I AM TOO OLD TO DO THIS KIND OF WORK!

JUST HOLD THE LIGHT, HENRY! I AM STRONG. I WILL MANAGE IT ALONE!

"AND THAT SAME NIGHT..."

USE A LOCAL ANESTHETIC, I WANT TO WATCH IN THAT MIRROR ON THE CEILING!

AS YOU WISH, FREDERICK!

AND AFTER YOUR RECOVERY, FIVE YEARS AGO...WE PARTED! AND NOW YOU SEND FOR ME AGAIN! CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING, FREDERICK?

YES, HENRY! THE TIME BETWEEN OPERATIONS IS GROWING SHORTER!

AND THIS WILL CONTINUE UNTIL YOU WILL NEED A NEW GLAND EVERY YEAR...EVERY MONTH...*EVERY WEEK!*

NO...IT WILL *NEVER* COME TO THAT! PERHAPS A YOUNGER GLAND! *A CHILDS!!*

I CANNOT GO ON, FREDERICK! *I REFUSE!*

YOU *MUST!! YOU MUST!*

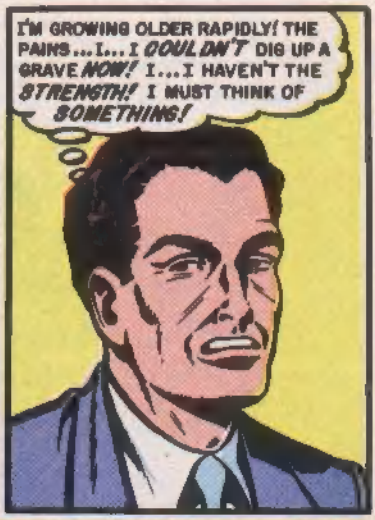
NO! I *REFUSE!* I WILL *NOT* PERFORM THE OPERATION AGAIN!

DODDERING OLD FOOL!

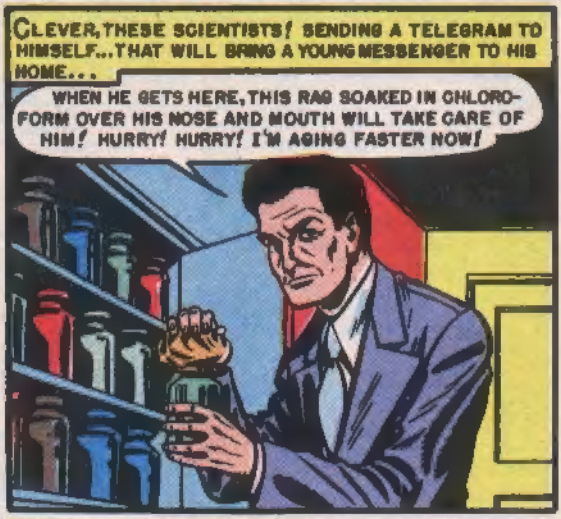
OOOOF!

YOU... YOU STRUCK... ME... GASP... YOU... FREDERICK! MY HEART!!
HENRY!

HE... HE'S DEAD! WHAT WILL I DO? WHAT WILL I DO NOW?

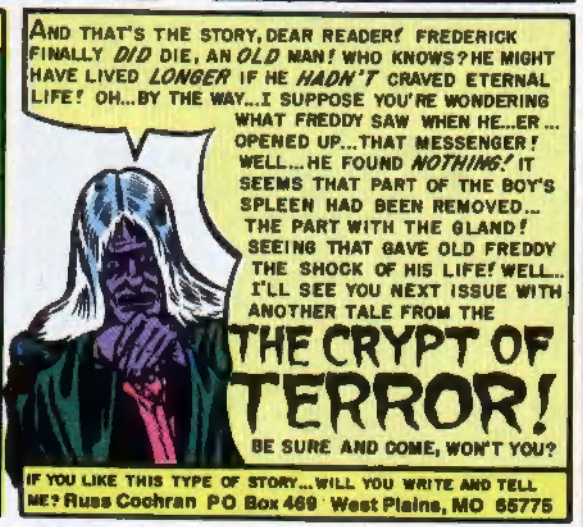

I'M GROWING OLDER RAPIDLY! THE PAINS... I... I COULDN'T DIG UP A GRAVE NOW! I... I HAVEN'T THE STRENGTH! I MUST THINK OF SOMETHING!

WELL, DEAR READER! OLD... ER... THAT IS IN YEARS... FREDERICK IS IN A MESS, NOW! HE NEEDS A NICE YOUNG VIRILE SPECIMEN... BUT QUICKLY!
HELLO... POSTAL UNION! I WANT TO SEND A TELEGRAM... QUICKLY... TO FREDERICK CASTON...


CLEVER, THESE SCIENTISTS! SENDING A TELEGRAM TO HIMSELF... THAT WILL BRING A YOUNG MESSENGER TO HIS HOME...
WHEN HE GETS HERE, THIS RAG SOAKED IN CHLOROFORM OVER HIS NOSE AND MOUTH WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM! HURRY! HURRY! I'M AGING FASTER NOW!

...SHARP PAINS SHOOT THROUGH FREDERICK CASTON AS HE WAITS! WRINKLES BEGAN TO APPEAR IN HIS SKIN, IN HIS FACE, HIS HANDS... AND THEN... THE DOORBELL...
YES?
TELEGRAM FOR FREDERICK CASTON! I....

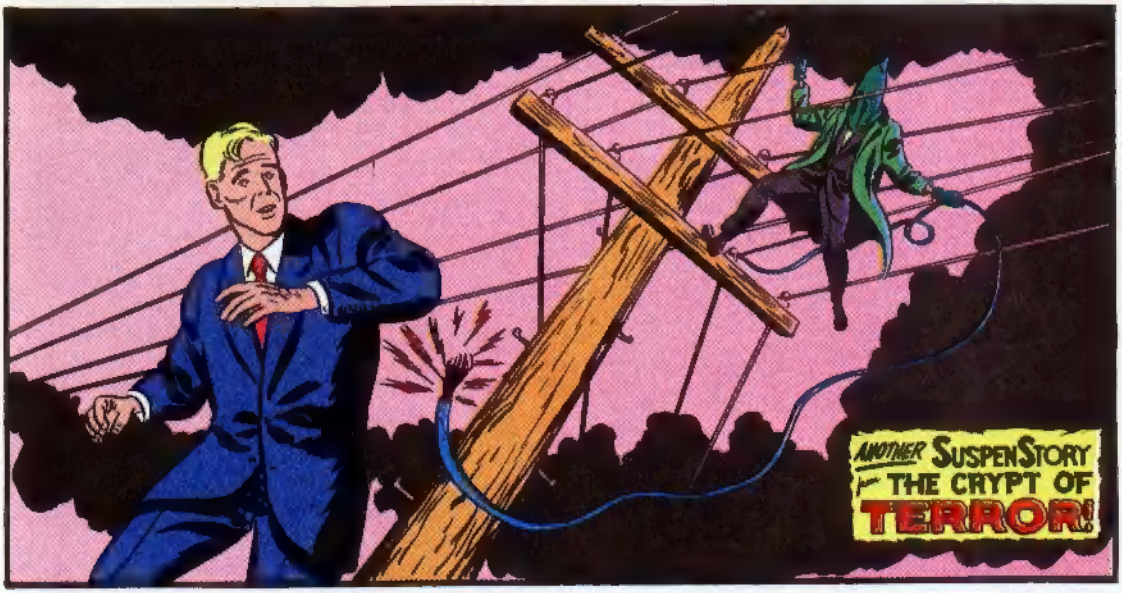
MMMPH---!!
HEH... HEH... THIS WAS TOO EASY! NOW I'LL GIVE HIM A HYPO TO KILL HIM!

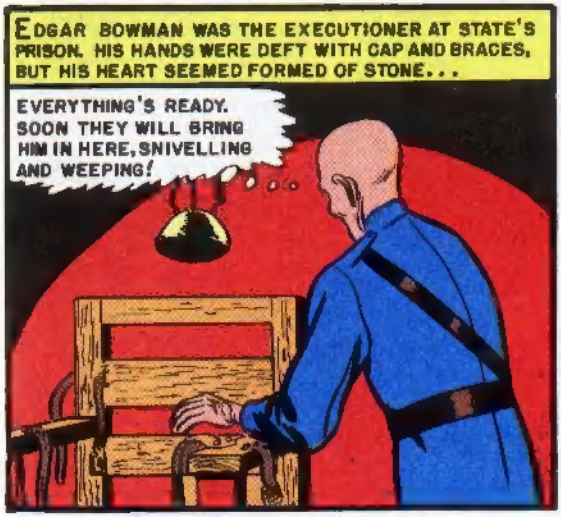


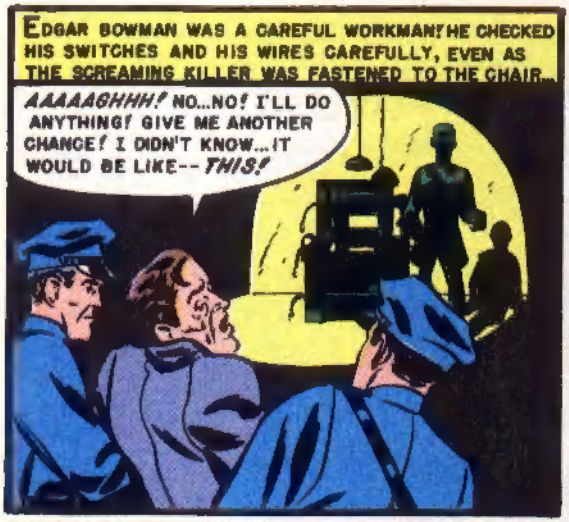
IF YOU LIKE THIS TYPE OF STORY... WILL YOU WRITE AND TELL ME? Russ Cochran PO Box 469 West Plains, MO 65775

OUT OF THE DARK NIGHT HE WALKED, HIS HANDS TRAINED IN THE ART OF KILLING, HIS BRAIN A SEETHING FERMENT OF DESTRUCTION! HIS EYES SAW LIFE, AND HIS HEART LOVED THE GRAVE, FOR HE WAS---

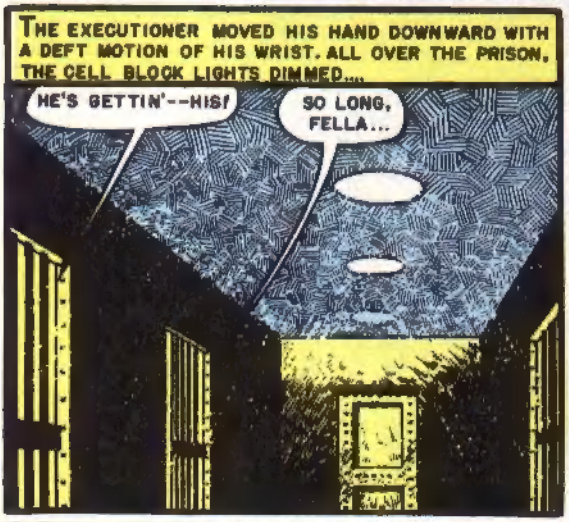
"THE MAN WHO WAS DEATH"

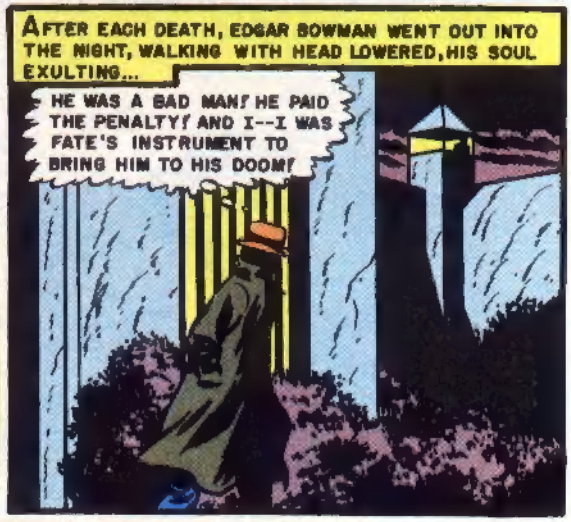




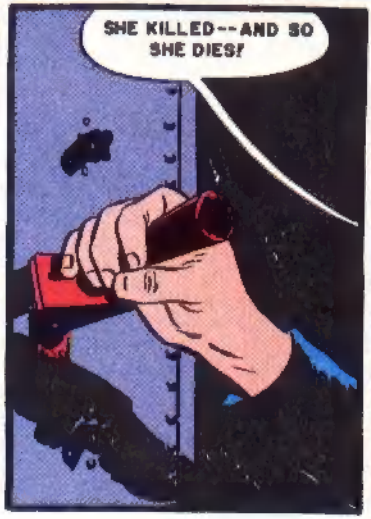

EDGAR BOWMAN WAS A CAREFUL WORKMAN! HE CHECKED HIS SWITCHES AND HIS WIRES CAREFULLY, EVEN AS THE SCREAMING KILLER WAS FASTENED TO THE CHAIR...
AAAAAGHHH! NO...NO! I'LL DO ANYTHING! GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE! I DIDN'T KNOW...IT WOULD BE LIKE--THIS!

THEY NEVER KNOW--UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE!


THE EXECUTIONER MOVED HIS HAND DOWNWARD WITH A DEFT MOTION OF HIS WRIST. ALL OVER THE PRISON, THE CELL BLOCK LIGHTS DIMMED...
HE'S GETTIN'--HIS!
SO LONG, FELLA...


AFTER EACH DEATH, EDGAR BOWMAN WENT OUT INTO THE NIGHT, WALKING WITH HEAD LOWERED, HIS SOUL EXULTING...
HE WAS A BAD MAN! HE PAID THE PENALTY! AND I--I WAS FATE'S INSTRUMENT TO BRING HIM TO HIS DOOM!

DAY AFTER DAY, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, IT WAS ALWAYS THE SAME...
SPINELESS WEAKLINGS, EVERY LAST ONE OF 'EM! I THOUGHT THIS ONE WOULD BE DIFFERENT. SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE COLD--INHUMAN! BUT SHE YELLS JUST LIKE THE REST!
AAAAIIIEEEE!!!


SHE KILLED--AND SO SHE DIES!

THAT GUY JUST LOVES HIS WORK, DOESN'T HE?
I'LL SAY! I WOULDN'T TAKE IT ON A BET--BUT HE GETS FAMOUS ON ACCOUNT OF IT!

EDGAR BOWMAN'S FAME SPREAD TO NEARBY STATES. PRISONS SENT HIM INVITATIONS TO ATTEND THEIR EXECUTIONS AS GUEST OF HONOR...

IN THIS STATE WE HAVE A GAS CHAMBER! WOULD YOU CARE TO RELEASE THE GAS?

I CERTAINLY WOULD, SIR! IT WILL BE A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR ME!

HMMMM. HANGING IS THE METHOD IN THIS STATE, EH?

IT IS! QUICK AND SURE! CARE TO PRESS THE ROPE RELEASE?

FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN, THE NAME OF EDGAR BOWMAN BECAME KNOWN. HE WAS A SYMBOL OF JUSTICE! HIS HANDS WERE QUICK AND CERTAIN. HE KILLED CALMLY, QUICKLY! WITH HIM, DEATH WAS A SERVANT TO HIS BIDDING! HE WENT ON THE RADIO, ON TELEVISION.....

AND THEN, ONE AFTERNOON IN THE WARDEN'S OFFICE OF THE STATE PRISON...

NOTHING MUCH DOING FOR YOU, EDGAR! SEEMS PEOPLE HAVE BEEN BEHAVING THEMSELVES LATELY, NO DEATH PENALTIES AT ALL!

THAT WON'T KEEP UP. THERE ARE ALWAYS PEOPLE GOING OFF THEIR TROLLEY! I'M NOT WORRIED!

BUT AS THE DAYS WENT BY...

CASPER JONES--NOT GUILTY! ARTHUR BOWAY--NOT GUILTY! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THOSE JURIES, ANYHOW?

NOT GUILTY! NOT GUILTY! TEN MURDERERS IN AS MANY WEEKS--AND ALL OF THEM SET FREE! FOOLS! THAT'S WHAT THOSE JURIES CONSIST OF--FOOLS! WELL, I'M NO FOOL! I KNOW THEY'RE GUILTY!

WITH TIME ON HIS HANDS, EDGAR BOWMAN ATTENDED MANY MURDER TRIALS...

WE FIND THE DEFENDANT, GEORGE FLOOD — NOT GUILTY!

WE FIND THE DEFENDANT, BETTY BATES — NOT GUILTY!

THAT'S ALL THEY CAN SAY, THE IDIOTS!

NOT GUILTY

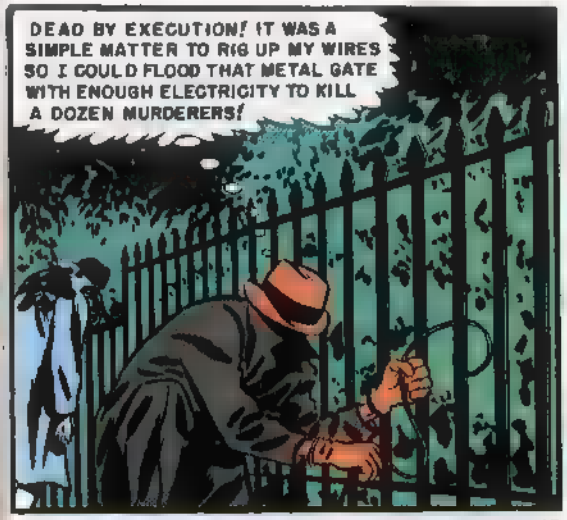
THEY *ARE* GUILTY! GUILTY OF — *MURDER!* AND AS STATE EXECUTIONER — IT'S UP TO *ME* TO EXECUTE THEM! OF COURSE! I'M BEING TESTED — BY SOME HIGHER AUTHORITY! IF I FAIL — THEY'LL TAKE MY JOB AWAY!

AN EXECUTIONER! OF COURSE! THAT'S WHAT I AM. AND SINCE I AM — *I'LL EXECUTE!*

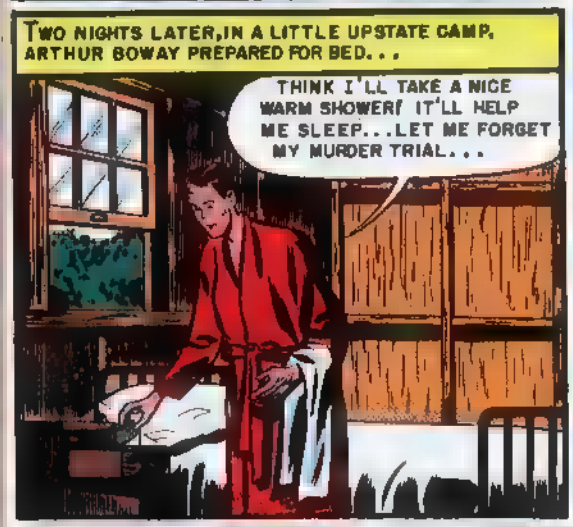
THAT NIGHT, AS CASPER JONES WALKED HOME FROM WORK, JUST THREE WEEKS AFTER A JURY FREED HIM...

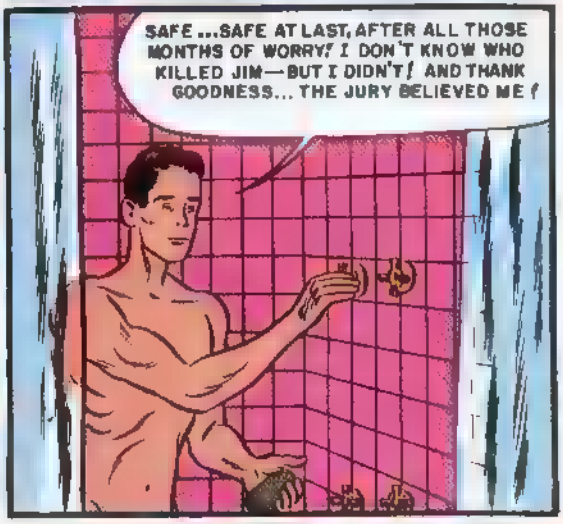
HIS HAND WILL TOUCH THE IRON FENCE GATE... AND WHEN IT DOES...

GGGNNNNYYAAAAAA!!!

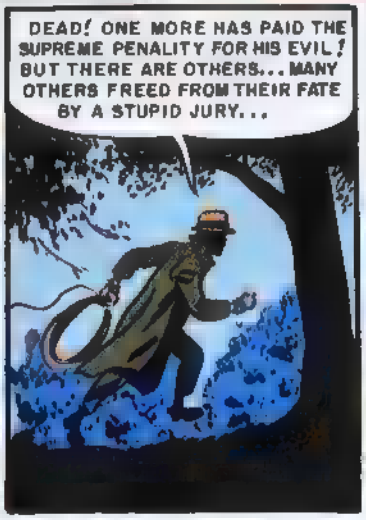

DEAD BY EXECUTION! IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER TO RIG UP MY WIRES SO I COULD FLOOD THAT METAL GATE WITH ENOUGH ELECTRICITY TO KILL A DOZEN MURDERERS!

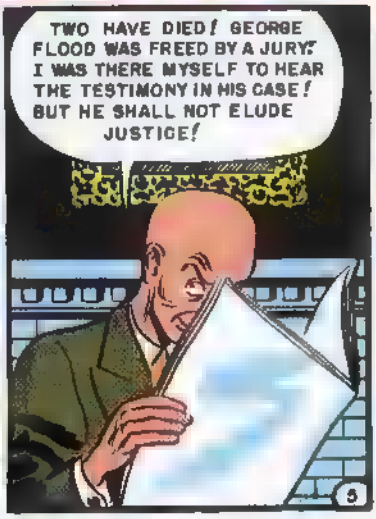
HE IS ONLY THE FIRST! THERE ARE MANY OTHERS THAT DESERVE TO DIE—AND WILL!

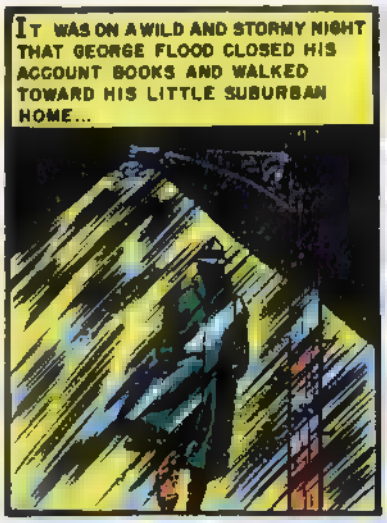

TWO NIGHTS LATER, IN A LITTLE UPSTATE CAMP, ARTHUR BOWAY PREPARED FOR BED...
THINK I'LL TAKE A NICE WARM SHOWER! IT'LL HELP ME SLEEP...LET ME FORGET MY MURDER TRIAL...


SAFE...SAFE AT LAST, AFTER ALL THOSE MONTHS OF WORRY! I DON'T KNOW WHO KILLED JIM—BUT I DIDN'T! AND THANK GOODNESS... THE JURY BELIEVED ME!

GGGGGGAAAAA!!!!

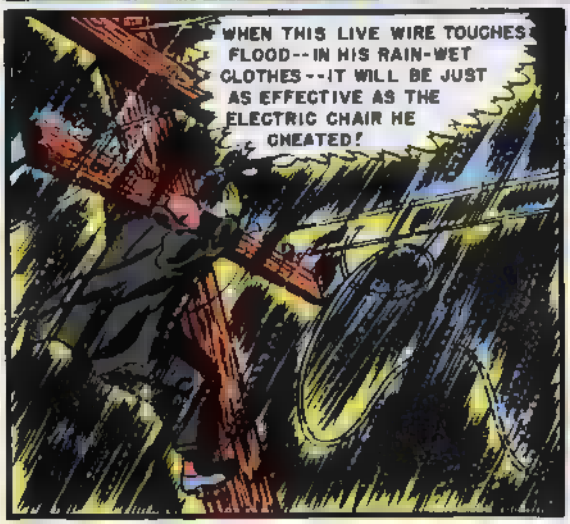

DEAD! ONE MORE HAS PAID THE SUPREME PENALITY FOR HIS EVIL! BUT THERE ARE OTHERS... MANY OTHERS FREED FROM THEIR FATE BY A STUPID JURY...


TWO HAVE DIED! GEORGE FLOOD WAS FREED BY A JURY! I WAS THERE MYSELF TO HEAR THE TESTIMONY IN HIS CASE! BUT HE SHALL NOT ELUDE JUSTICE!

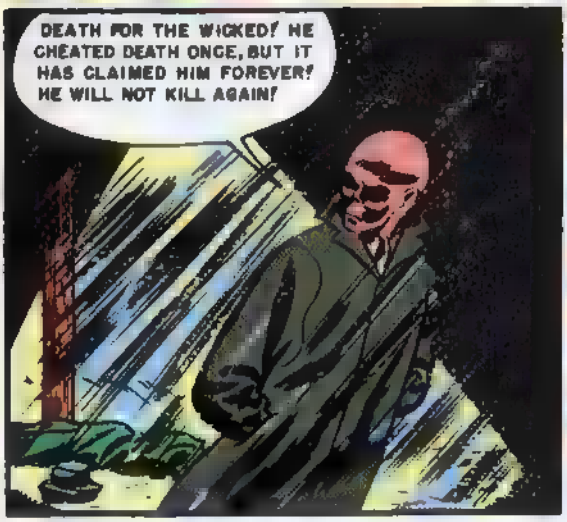

IT WAS ON A WILD AND STORMY NIGHT THAT GEORGE FLOOD CLOSED HIS ACCOUNT BOOKS AND WALKED TOWARD HIS LITTLE SUBURBAN HOME...

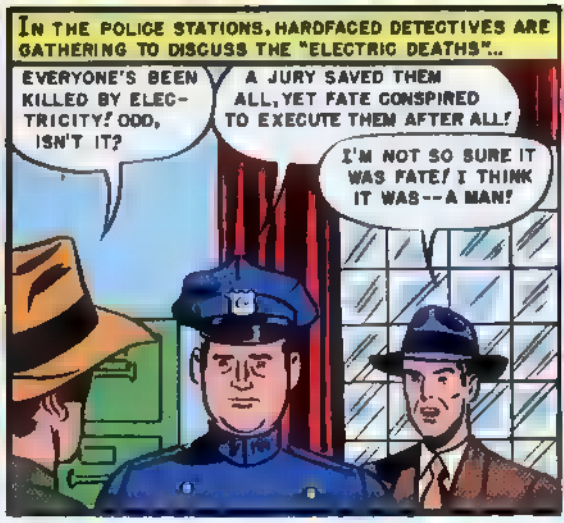
I GUESS I'M JUST ABOUT THE HAPPIEST MAN IN THE ENTIRE WORLD...
HERE COMES THE MURDERER NOW!

A SNIP OF WIRE CUTTERS IN INSULATION-GLOVED HANDS--

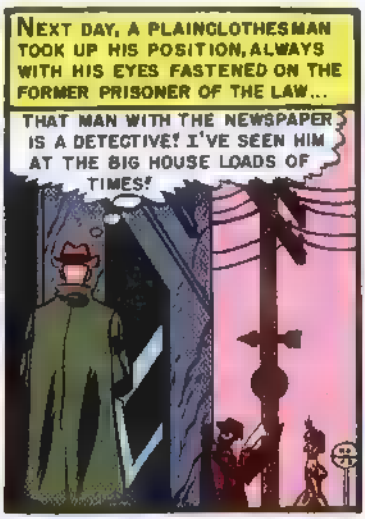

WHEN THIS LIVE WIRE TOUCHES FLOOD--IN HIS RAIN-WET CLOTHES--IT WILL BE JUST AS EFFECTIVE AS THE ELECTRIC CHAIR HE CHEATED!

AAAAGGGHH!

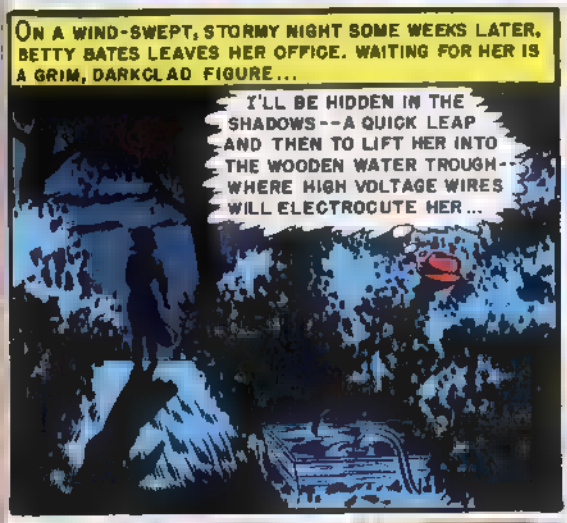

DEATH FOR THE WICKED! HE CHEATED DEATH ONCE, BUT IT HAS CLAIMED HIM FOREVER! HE WILL NOT KILL AGAIN!


IN THE POLICE STATIONS, HARDFACED DETECTIVES ARE GATHERING TO DISCUSS THE "ELECTRIC DEATHS"...
EVERYONE'S BEEN KILLED BY ELECTRICITY! ODD, ISN'T IT?
A JURY SAVED THEM ALL, YET FATE CONSPIRED TO EXECUTE THEM AFTER ALL!
I'M NOT SO SURE IT WAS FATE! I THINK IT WAS--A MAN!

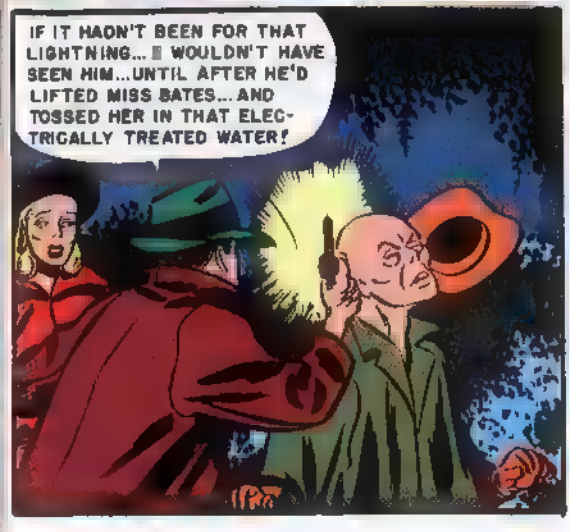
MAYBE I'M WRONG--BUT WE'LL SOON FIND OUT! WATCH BETTY BATES! A JURY FREED HER A MONTH AGO. IF A MAN IS OUT TO KILL HER--HE'LL TRY SOON!
YOU'RE RIGHT! WE'LL GUARD HER NIGHT AND DAY...

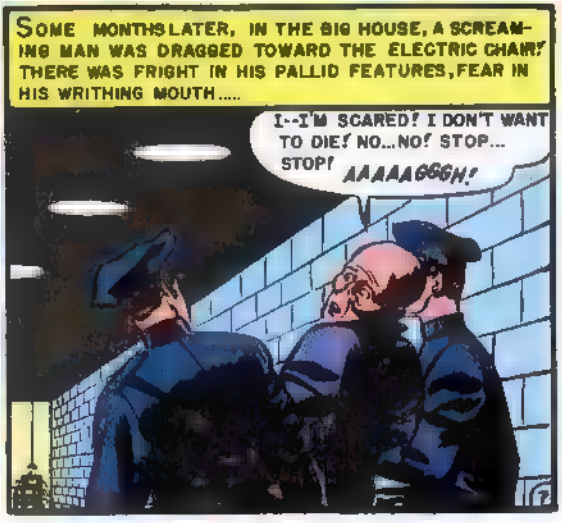

NEXT DAY, A PLAINCLOTHESMAN TOOK UP HIS POSITION, ALWAYS WITH HIS EYES FASTENED ON THE FORMER PRISONER OF THE LAW...
THAT MAN WITH THE NEWSPAPER IS A DETECTIVE! I'VE SEEN HIM AT THE BIG HOUSE LOADS OF TIMES!

THIS EXECUTION WILL HAVE TO BE--MY MASTERPIECE! THE POLICE WILL TRY TO STOP ME, BUT I MUST NOT LET THEM! HMMM... THIS WILL REQUIRE SOME THOUGHT...


ON A WIND-SWEPT, STORMY NIGHT SOME WEEKS LATER, BETTY BATES LEAVES HER OFFICE. WAITING FOR HER IS A GRIM, DARKCLAD FIGURE...
I'LL BE HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS--A QUICK LEAP AND THEN TO LIFT HER INTO THE WOODEN WATER TROUGH--WHERE HIGH VOLTAGE WIRES WILL ELECTROCUTE HER...

BUT EVEN AS THE EXECUTIONER LEAPED FORWARD, HIDDEN BY DARKNESS AND THE SHADOWS, A BRILLIANT BOLT OF ELECTRICITY--*LIGHTNING!*--LIGHTED UP THE SCENE LIKE A BEAM OF SUNLIGHT!
LOOK OUT! THERE'S A MAN THERE!
EEEEEEE!


IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THAT LIGHTNING... I WOULDN'T HAVE SEEN HIM...UNTIL AFTER HE'D LIFTED MISS BATES... AND TOSSED HER IN THAT ELECTRICALLY TREATED WATER!


SOME MONTHS LATER, IN THE BIG HOUSE, A SCREAMING MAN WAS DRAGGED TOWARD THE ELECTRIC CHAIR! THERE WAS FRIGHT IN HIS PALLID FEATURES, FEAR IN HIS WRITHING MOUTH.....
I--I'M SCARED! I DON'T WANT TO DIE! NO...NO! STOP... STOP!
AAAAAGGGH!

ALIBI...ON *ICE!*

State Trooper Mark Holliday looked down at the body stretched in the snow at his feet. The man had evidently been skiing down treacherous Hairpin Turn . . . had momentarily lost control of his skis . . . and had crashed head-on into the gnarled old tree which poked its tremendous girth up out of the snow and ice around it!

"I can't imagine how in the world it could have happened," mumbled the giant of a man standing at the Trooper's elbow. "This turn on the ski slope has a bad reputation, I know . . . but still . . . he claimed to be an EXPERT skier! Awful bad ACCIDENT!"

Trooper Holliday nodded almost unconsciously to the tall man's speech. Funny thing, he mused. An EXPERT skier, this Jack Benson says . . . and yet the man can't stop himself short of such an obvious obstacle as this old tree!

"I just happened to be looking out of the window of the Inn when I saw this guy go shooting down the hill," big Jack Benson was saying, his large St. Bernard's eyes roving over the landscape. "Sure happened sudden . . . an awful tragedy . . . accident like this!"

Trooper Holliday looked down at the dead man. His eyes roved over the figure . . . moved on to the trunk of the tree . . . and then crossed back to the spot where towering Jack Benson stood, his feet stamping against the snow to keep his toes warm.

"YOU do much skiing, Benson?" asked Holliday. "See any other accidents like this one in all the time you've owned that inn up there on the hill?"

Benson's eyes squinted at the State Trooper before he answered. "Can't say as I have, Officer . . . first kind like THIS!"

Trooper Holliday rubbed his chin, let his hand rest momentarily under his coat. When he brought it out, the fingers were gripped tight around his revolver.

"You better put your hands up, Benson . . . we've got a trip to make to Headquarters!"

Benson started to sputter his innocence, but one look from the Trooper quieted him. "Couple of things don't look like accidents to ME! The bark of the tree where the victim was supposed to crash, for instance," said the Trooper. "If you look closely you'll find it isn't even peeled . . . and yet the man was supposed to hit it hard enough to crack his skull! And his clothing . . . got too much on him, especially for an expert skier! But what points the finger at YOU," said the Trooper, as he steered Benson down the snow-covered hillside, "are those skis! The man on the ground is less than five-and-a-half feet tall . . . and those skis are long enough for a giant! A Giant like YOU!"

CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER EXTRA

I have a question that has puzzled me for a while now. I wasn't around in the early 50's, but I have a few original Tales from the Crypt comics and I noticed inside the front cover of them at the bottom it says that "Tales From The Crypt" was formerly "The Crypt of Terror." I have the last "Tales From The Crypt" which was #46, and inside there is an article that says E.C. was not planning to make a #46, instead they were going to make #45 the last and make a fourth title called "The Crypt of Terror," but because the comic censors felt Tales, Vault and Haunt were a "bad influence on kids" they made a Crypt #46 and ended the 3 titles. What I would like to know is was there ever a "Crypt of Terror," and if not why did they print that "Tales" was formerly "The Crypt of Terror?"

Sincerely,
Tales From The Crypt's
#1 Fan,
Robert Borruso
Staten Island, NY

EC started a title called INTERNATIONAL COMICS in 1947 with an issue #1. The title was changed twice (to INTERNATIONAL CRIME PATROL and, later, to CRIME PATROL), but the numbering stayed in sequence. When the New Trend was launched, what would have been CRIME PATROL #17 became CRYPT OF TERROR #17. This was actually the first issue of CRYPT, then, despite the issue number. With the fourth issue of CRYPT, the title was changed to TALES FROM THE CRYPT; it is this name which was used for the longest time and under which the comic really hit its stride.

Near the end of the New Trend period, EC was on the verge of starting a FOURTH horror title, and would have resurrected the name CRYPT OF TERROR for it. That is the comic mentioned in the final issues of CRYPT, VAULT and HAUNT and illustrated in a famous house ad.

However, EC decided to scrap the whole New Trend line-up [illegible] soon released the New Direction series instead. Betwixt and between, the contents of the advertised THE CRYPT OF TERROR #5 of 1956 were published as the "46th" and final issue of TALES FROM THE CRYPT.

ABOVE IS THE COVER OF "CRYPT #1" (CRYPT OF TERROR #17, 1950) AS IT APPEARED UPON ORIGINAL RELEASE.

TELL-TALE MARKS!

Mister Corning picked up the telephone and called the Police station. While he held the phone, waiting for the connection to be made, he let his eye rove around the room. He could breathe a little more easily now, he thought to himself, his eye resting for one moment on the trophy case with the metal plate screwed to its top. *Mathew Corning . . . Curator* was inscribed in black on the bronze strip.

"Is this the Police station?" he asked the voice on the other end of the line. "This is Mathew Corning, Curator over at the Midtown Museum and Zoo. I'm afraid there's been a little trouble over here . . . I think we'll need your assistance!" Corning reached across the desk as he spoke and picked up a vial which contained an oily liquid. He cleared his throat, rolled the vial between his fingers. "The trouble took place just ten minutes ago . . . over in the Snake cage! A man who once worked here wandered in . . . evidently poked around! And now . . . we've got a corpse on our hands!"

* * * * *

It had gone off precisely as he had planned it, Corning thought to himself as he dropped the vial into his coat pocket. That meddlesome Smith had come back today as he had promised. All set to tell the authorities about that bit of trouble Corning had with the law years before. Unless, of course, Corning could make it worth his while to be quiet about the episode. And so he had made preparations to welcome Smith . . . something in the way of a farewell party, he thought to himself with a chuckle! The snakes . . . they had been the easiest way out of the difficulty! Who could question the death of a man who had stumbled into a cage-full of poisonous serpents?

* * * * *

The Detective stared down at the body of the man which the Zoo attendants had dragged out of the Snake Cage. The clothing around the shoulders was torn and shredded . . . and deep in the man's throat were two tiny punctures, which were beginning to turn bluish! Nasty thing, thought the Detective . . . to be killed that way by the bite of a poisonous snake! He stared closer to the corpse, and then he straightened out, his pencil point tapping against the glass top of the Curator's desk.

"Anybody else around when you heard the noise from the Cage?" the Detective asked Corning.

"Nobody that *I* know of," Corning answered, his fingertips rubbing against the vial in his coat-pocket. "I guess we were alone here . . just the two of us . . . and a cage-full of SNAKES!"

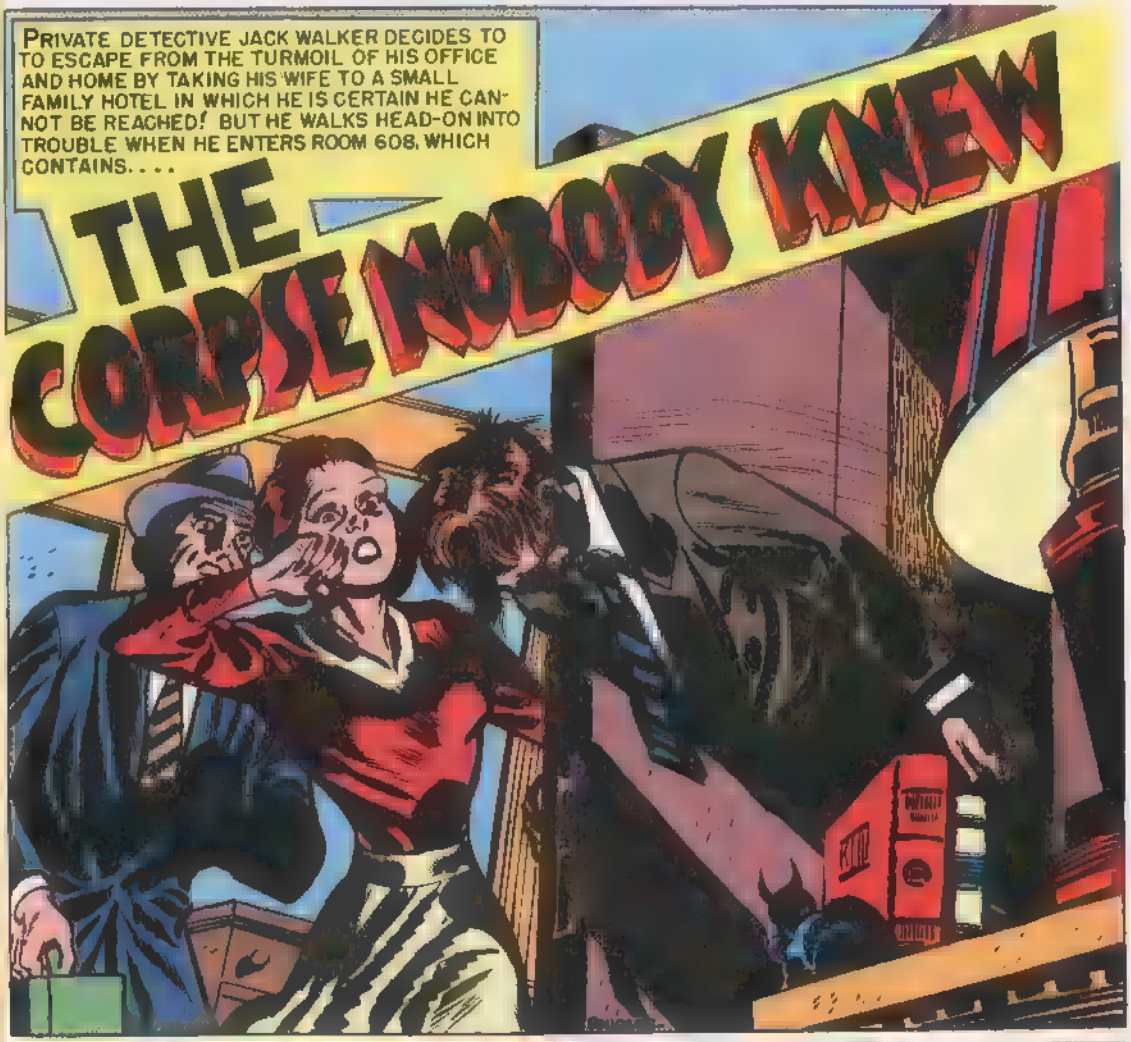
"Those marks are curious," the Detective said, his pencil tapping. "I remember reading something recently about snakes. Seems they very rarely will bite a man above the knee . . . certainly not as high up as the throat! And the reason is simple . . . no snake is large enough to arch its back and reach much higher than a foot-and-a-half off the ground!"

Corning gulped. He could feel his palm moist against the vial in his pocket.

"Those punctures undoubtedly contained snake venom," the Detective was saying, but Corning could no longer hear him very distinctly. "But I don't think they were administered by a snake's fangs! Perhaps YOU can tell us how they WERE administered, Mister Corning . . . down at Headquarters!"

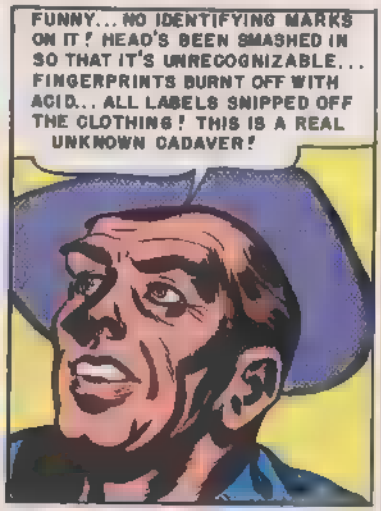
PRIVATE DETECTIVE JACK WALKER DECIDES TO TO ESCAPE FROM THE TURMOIL OF HIS OFFICE AND HOME BY TAKING HIS WIFE TO A SMALL FAMILY HOTEL IN WHICH HE IS CERTAIN HE CANNOT BE REACHED! BUT HE WALKS HEAD-ON INTO TROUBLE WHEN HE ENTERS ROOM 608, WHICH CONTAINS. . . .

THE CORPSE NOBODY KNEW

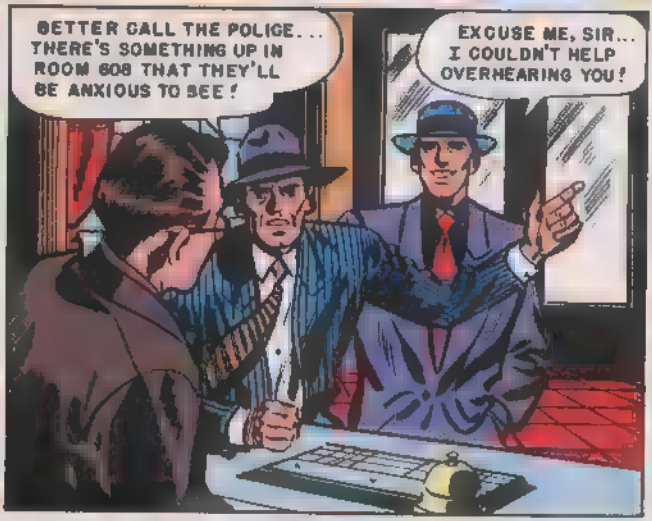


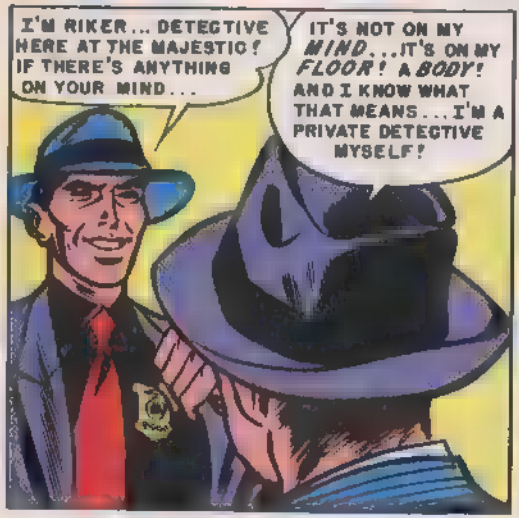
■ WON'T TAKE A SECOND AND... Y////!
W-WHAT'S UP, HONEY? FIND A SKELETON ■ THE CLOSET ... OR SOMETHING?

NOPE... IT'S NOT AGAG BY SOME OF THE BOYS IN THE OFFICE! THIS IS A REAL BIG-AS-LIFE CORPSE!
ONLY THERE'S NO LIFE LEFT IN IT!

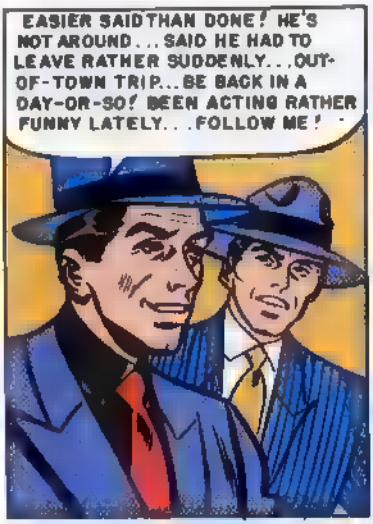

FUNNY... NO IDENTIFYING MARKS ON IT! HEAD'S BEEN SMASHED IN SO THAT IT'S UNRECOGNIZABLE... FINGERPRINTS BURNT OFF WITH ACID... ALL LABELS SNIPPED OFF THE CLOTHING! THIS IS A REAL UNKNOWN CADAVER!

I'LL RUN DOWNSTAIRS TO LET THE HOTEL MANAGER KNOW... AND TO CALL THE LAW! YOU STAY HERE... JUST TO MAKE SURE NOBODY TAMPERS WITH ANYTHING!
S-SURE, JACK.. I WON'T LET IT GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!

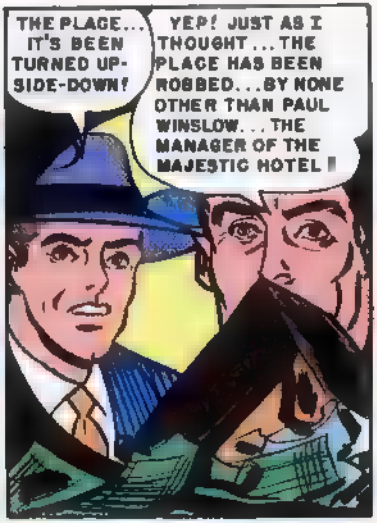

BETTER CALL THE POLICE... THERE'S SOMETHING UP IN ROOM 608 THAT THEY'LL BE ANXIOUS TO SEE!
EXCUSE ME, SIR... I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARING YOU!


I'M RIKER... DETECTIVE HERE AT THE MAJESTIC! IF THERE'S ANYTHING ON YOUR MIND...
IT'S NOT ON MY MIND... IT'S ON MY FLOOR! A BODY! AND I KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS... I'M A PRIVATE DETECTIVE MYSELF!

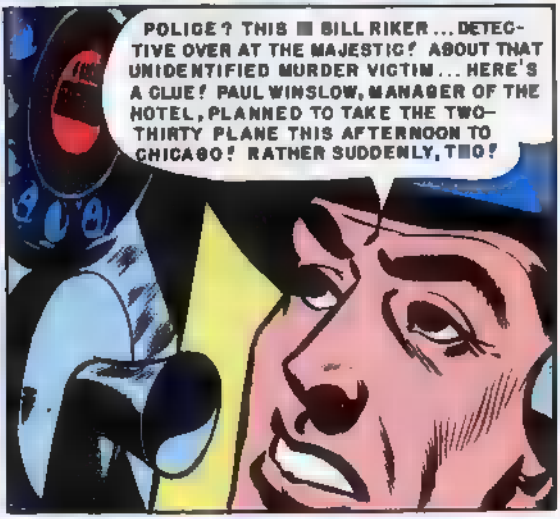
MURDER, EH? THAT'S BAD ... YOU'D BETTER CALL THE POLICE, SHANNON!
DON'T YOU THINK WE'D BETTER CALL THE HOTEL MANAGER, TOO? I MEAN... RIGHT HERE ■ HIS HOTEL...


EASIER SAID THAN DONE! HE'S NOT AROUND... SAID HE HAD TO LEAVE RATHER SUDDENLY... OUT-OF-TOWN TRIP... BE BACK IN A DAY-OR-SO! BEEN ACTING RATHER FUNNY LATELY... FOLLOW ME!

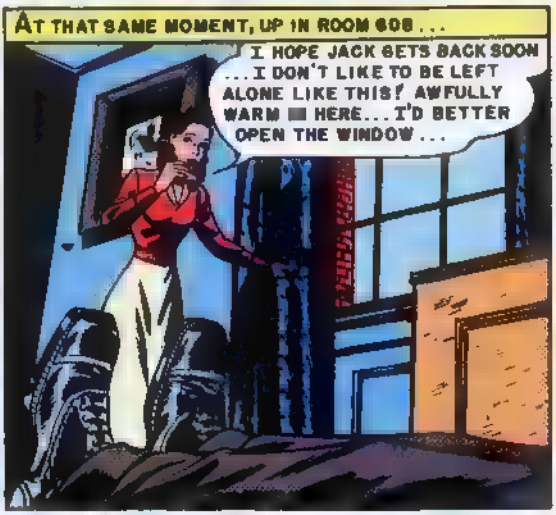
JUST A HUNCH OF MINE... THINK MAYBE HE STARTED OUT TO COMMIT A LITTLE INNOCENT LARCENY HERE IN THE HOTEL VAULT... AND THINGS WENT WRONG!


THE PLACE... IT'S BEEN TURNED UP-SIDE-DOWN!
YEP! JUST AS I THOUGHT... THE PLACE HAS BEEN ROBBED... BY NONE OTHER THAN PAUL WINSLOW... THE MANAGER OF THE MAJESTIC HOTEL!

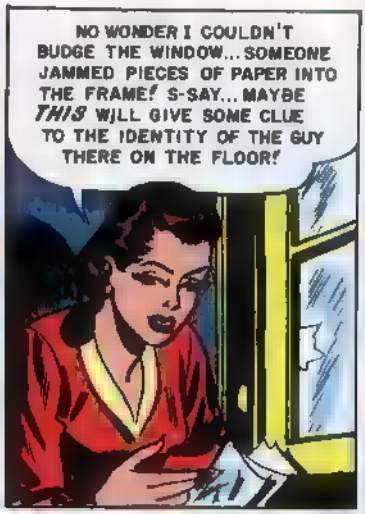
NOW WE'VE GOT SOMETHING TO TELL THE POLICE! LUCKY THING I HAPPENED TO LEARN THAT WINSLOW WAS PLANNING TO LEAVE TOWN... EVEN KNOW WHICH PLANE HE PLANS TO TAKE! THE COPS'LL LOVE ME FOR IT!
THE COMMISSIONER MAY EVEN *KISS* YOU!

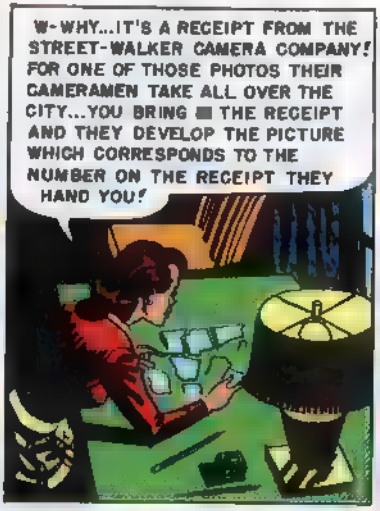

POLICE? THIS [redacted] BILL RIKER... DETECTIVE OVER AT THE MAJESTIC! ABOUT THAT UNIDENTIFIED MURDER VICTIM... HERE'S A CLUE! PAUL WINSLOW, MANAGER OF THE HOTEL, PLANNED TO TAKE THE TWO-THIRTY PLANE THIS AFTERNOON TO CHICAGO! RATHER SUDDENLY, T[redacted]O!

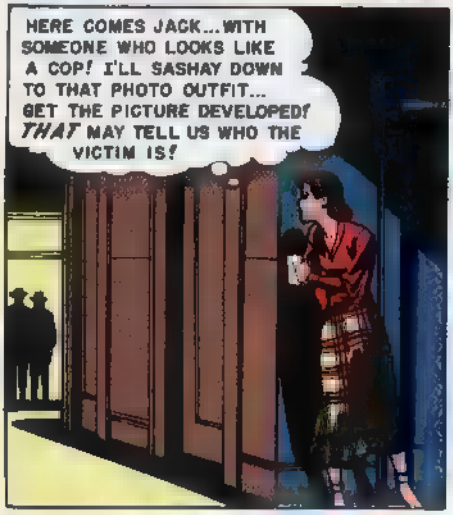
THE PONDEROUS MACHINERY WHICH DEALS WITH LAW AND ORDER BEGAN TO FUNCTION IMMEDIATELY...
CALLING SQUAD CARS EIGHT TO THIRTEEN... EIGHT TO THIRTEEN! VISIT ALL THE AIRLINE OFFICES IN TOWN! GET INFO ON A PAUL WINSLOW... SUPPOSED TO HAVE LEFT BY PLANE AT TWO-THIRTY! *URGENT!*

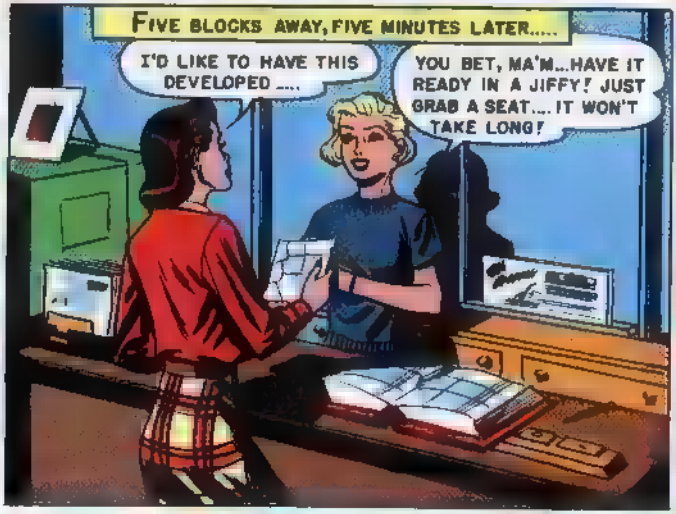

AT THAT SAME MOMENT, UP IN ROOM 608...
I HOPE JACK GETS BACK SOON... I DON'T LIKE TO BE LEFT ALONE LIKE THIS! AWFULLY WARM [redacted] HERE... I'D BETTER OPEN THE WINDOW...

JACK DOESN'T WANT ME TO STRAY OUT OF THE ROOM...SO I'LL HAVE TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT! UGHHH! THIS WINDOW IS SHUT SOLID!


NO WONDER I COULDN'T BUDGE THE WINDOW...SOMEONE JAMMED PIECES OF PAPER INTO THE FRAME! S-SAY... MAYBE *THIS* WILL GIVE SOME CLUE TO THE IDENTITY OF THE GUY THERE ON THE FLOOR!


W-WHY...IT'S A RECEIPT FROM THE STREET-WALKER CAMERA COMPANY! FOR ONE OF THOSE PHOTOS THEIR CAMERAMEN TAKE ALL OVER THE CITY...YOU BRING ■ THE RECEIPT AND THEY DEVELOP THE PICTURE WHICH CORRESPONDS TO THE NUMBER ON THE RECEIPT THEY HAND YOU!


HERE COMES JACK...WITH SOMEONE WHO LOOKS LIKE A COP! I'LL SASHAY DOWN TO THAT PHOTO OUTFIT... GET THE PICTURE DEVELOPED! *THAT* MAY TELL US WHO THE VICTIM IS!

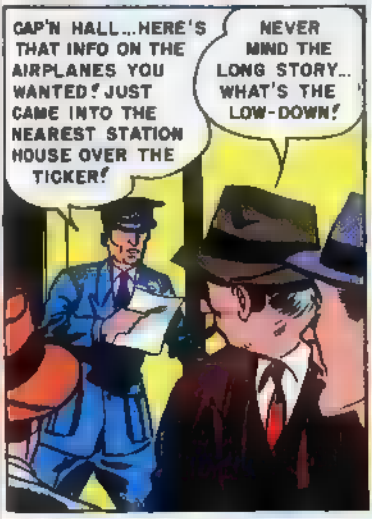

FIVE BLOCKS AWAY, FIVE MINUTES LATER.....
I'D LIKE TO HAVE THIS DEVELOPED ....
YOU BET, MA'M...HAVE IT READY IN A JIFFY! JUST GRAB A SEAT....IT WON'T TAKE LONG!

HERE IT IS, LADY...ALL DEVELOPED AND PRINTED! AND IT'S A BEAUT... CLEAR AS CRYSTAL! LUCKY THE CAMERA THAT TOOK IT HAD BEEN TURNED ■ FOR THE DAY...OTHERWISE YOU MIGHT HAVE HAD TO WAIT FOR A WHILE!
Y-YES...J-JUST HAND IT OVER!

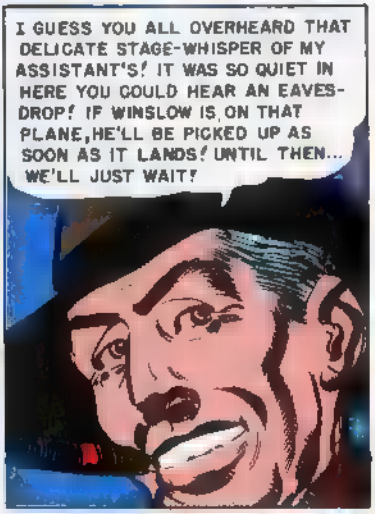
NO ONE *I* KNOW...BUT MAYBE IT'LL HELP JACK OR THE POLICE FIND OUT WHO THAT IS THERE ON THE FLOOR! *THIS* MAY BE THE CLUE THAT SMASHES THE CASE!

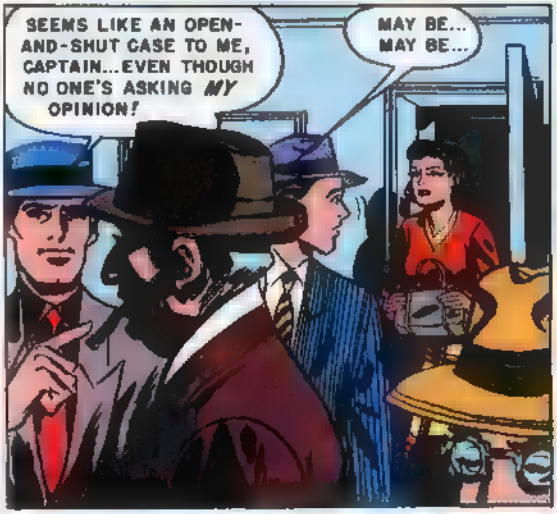
WHILE BACK AT THE MAJESTIC HOTEL.....
SCOURED EVERY INCH OF THE ROOM... WENT OVER THE BODY AND CLOTHING WITH A FINE-TOOTH COMB...NOT A CLUE AS TO WHO IT IS! AND THE BODY'S BEEN SO BADLY BATTERED...PROBABLY THE GUY'S OWN MOTHER WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE 'IM!

EXCUSE ME, CAPTAIN HALL...I DON'T LIKE TO BUTT ON THE POLICE...BUT MAYBE *THIS* WILL HELP! SINCE THE SAFE WAS RIFLED...AND ONLY WINSLOW KNEW THE COMBINATION...THIS MAN MAY HAVE BEEN KILLED BECAUSE HE *SAW* WINSLOW IN THE ACT OF ROBBERY!

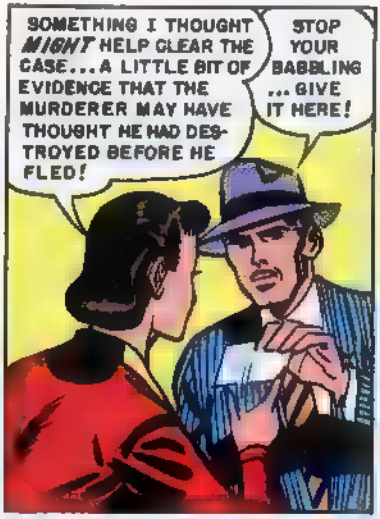

CAP'N HALL...HERE'S THAT INFO ON THE AIRPLANES YOU WANTED! JUST CAME INTO THE NEAREST STATION HOUSE OVER THE TICKER!
NEVER MIND THE LONG STORY... WHAT'S THE LOW-DOWN!

HE SIGNED INTO THE TRANS-NATION AIRLINES AT 2:30 OR SO... BOUGHT A TICKET ON THE 2:35 PLANE TO CHICAGO. REGISTERED AS PAUL WINSLOW OF THIS CITY! NO CHECK YET AS TO WHETHER HE ACTUALLY GOT ON THE PLANE!
HMMM...


I GUESS YOU ALL OVERHEARD THAT DELICATE STAGE-WHISPER OF MY ASSISTANT'S! IT WAS SO QUIET IN HERE YOU COULD HEAR AN EAVES-DROP! IF WINSLOW IS ON THAT PLANE, HE'LL BE PICKED UP AS SOON AS IT LANDS! UNTIL THEN... WE'LL JUST WAIT!

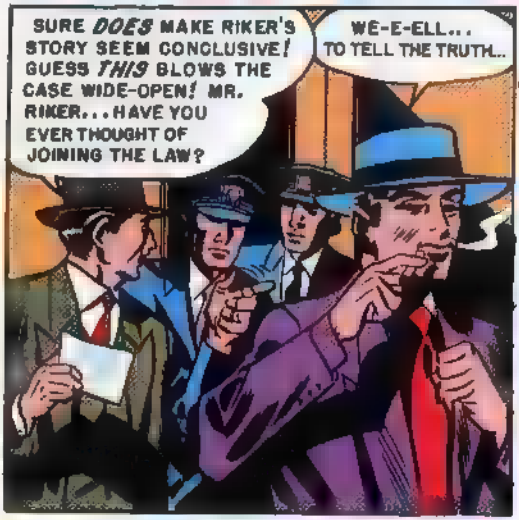

SEEMS LIKE AN OPEN-AND-SHUT CASE TO ME, CAPTAIN...EVEN THOUGH NO ONE'S ASKING *MY* OPINION!
MAY BE... MAY BE...

W-WHAT IS THIS... A *WAKE*?
WHERE HAVE *YOU* BEEN, MY FINE FEATHER-BRAINED FRIEND? AND WHAT IS THAT YOU'VE GOT IN YOUR HAND?


SOMETHING I THOUGHT MIGHT HELP CLEAR THE CASE... A LITTLE BIT OF EVIDENCE THAT THE MURDERER MAY HAVE THOUGHT HE HAD DESTROYED BEFORE HE FLED!
STOP YOUR BABBLING ... GIVE IT HERE!

MIGHT CLEAR THE MYSTERY? IT MAKES IT AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE! JUST LOOK AT IT CAPTAIN HALL... AND THEN TELL ME IF RIKER DIDN'T HAVE ALL THE STEPS DOWN PAT!

TRANSNATION AIRLINES
PAUL WINSLOW


SURE DOES MAKE RIKER'S STORY SEEM CONCLUSIVE! GUESS THIS BLOWS THE CASE WIDE-OPEN! MR. RIKER... HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF JOINING THE LAW?
WE-E-ELL... TO TELL THE TRUTH...

H-HEY!!! W-WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS...
IT MEANS THAT WE'RE HOLDING YOU FOR THE MURDER OF THE MAN ON THE FLOOR... WHOEVER HE IS! I THINK MR. WALKER HERE CAN EXPLAIN...

YOU MADE YOUR FIRST MISTAKE, RIKER, WHEN YOU TOLD US THAT WINSLOW WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW THE COMBINATION TO THE SAFE... AND YET YOU, YOURSELF, LET ME IN! AND THEN THAT PHOTO... WHICH PROVES THAT YOU TRIED TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE WINSLOW HAD LEFT TOWN... THAT DID IT!

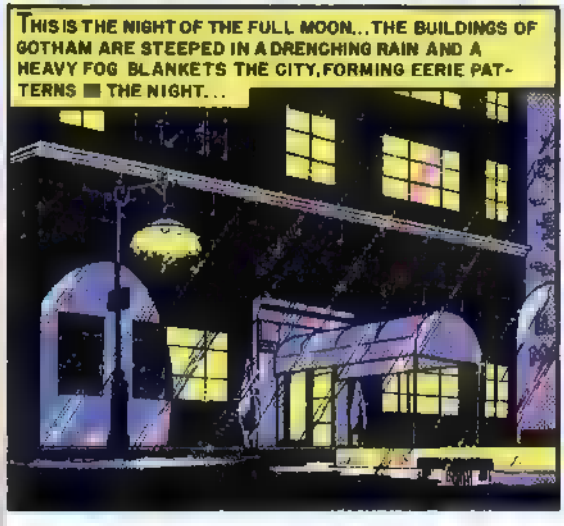
I'VE GOT A HUNCH YOU'LL FIND THAT CORPSE IS PAUL WINSLOW, CAP'N HALL! AND THAT RIKER'S EXPLANATION OF THE CRIME WAS PERFECT... SUBSTITUTING HIS NAME FOR WINSLOW'S! C'MON, MINNIE... LET'S GET BACK HOME... WHERE IT'S PEACEFUL!

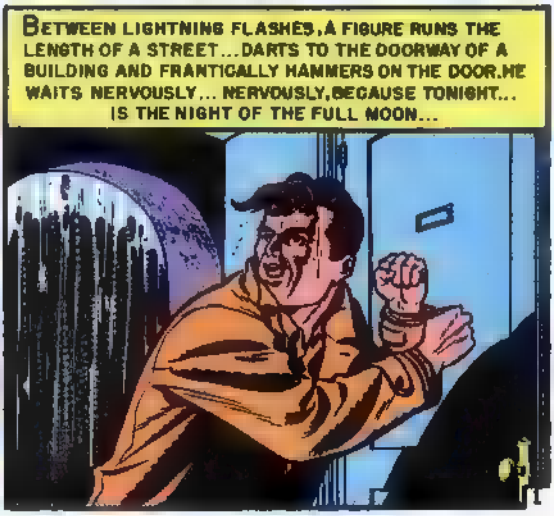
THE DENSE FORESTS OF EASTERN EUROPE, THERE GROWS A WILD PLANT CALLED WOLFS-BANE. LEGEND HAS IT THAT ANY HUMAN WHO COMES IN CONTACT WITH ITS THORNS WILL BECOME A WEREWOLF, AND SUFFER THE...

CURSE OF THE FULL MOON!

ANOTHER SUSPENSTORY FROM THE CRYPT OF TERROR!

JOHNNY CRAIG



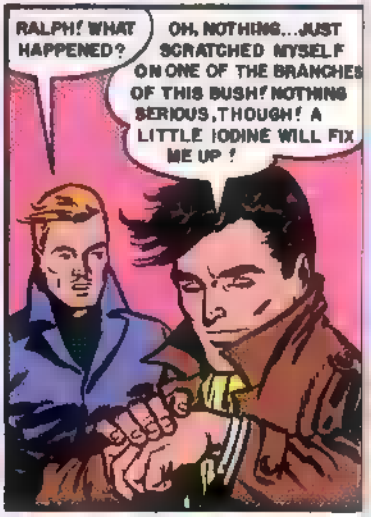


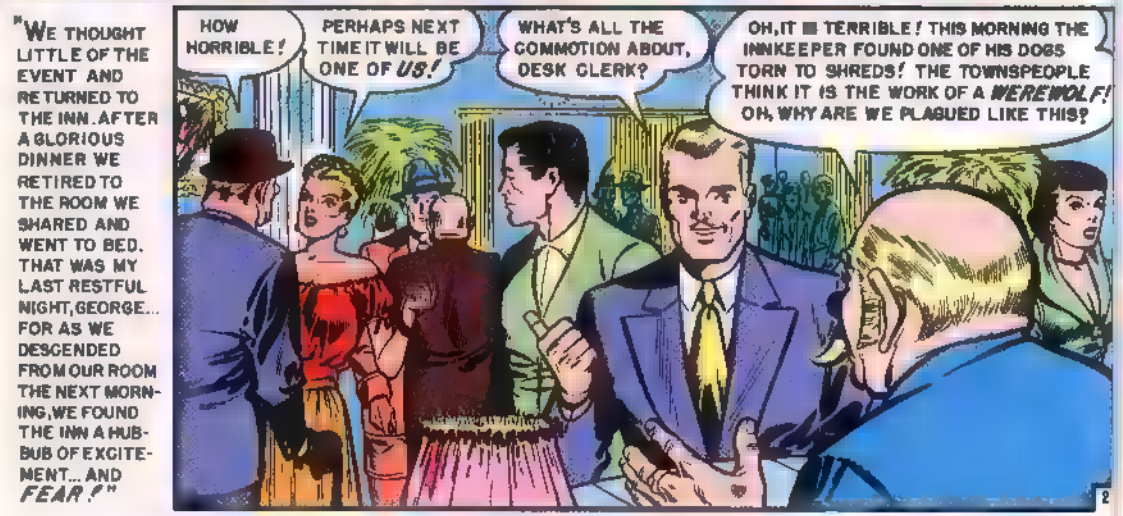
YES? WHAT CAN I... RALPH! WHAT ON EARTH...?
GEORGE! GEORGE, YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME! TONIGHT... THE FULL MOON, GEORGE! I'M... I'M AFRAID! YOU'RE A PSYCHIATRIST, GEORGE! YOU CAN HELP ME...

GREAT SCOTT, MAN! STOP THAT BABBELING! GET THOSE WET THINGS OFF FIRST... THEN YOU CAN TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT!
YES GEORGE, YES! YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND... I CAN TELL YOU...

THERE! NOW JUST LIE BACK AND RELAX... RELAX, AND TELL ME WHAT'S FRIGHTENED YOU SO...
YES...YES, RELAX! I...I MUST COMPOSE MYSELF! GEORGE... YOU REMEMBER OUR TOUR OF EUROPE SOME TIME AGO, DON'T YOU?

"REMEMBER HOW WE STOPPED OFF AT THAT LITTLE VILLAGE IN HUNGARY? WE STAYED SEVERAL DAYS...ONCE GOING FOR A WALK IN THE FOREST...REMEMBER?"
A DAY LIKE THIS MAKES YOU FEEL GLAD YOU'RE ALIVE, EH RALPH?
SURE DOES GEORGE! I... OUCH!

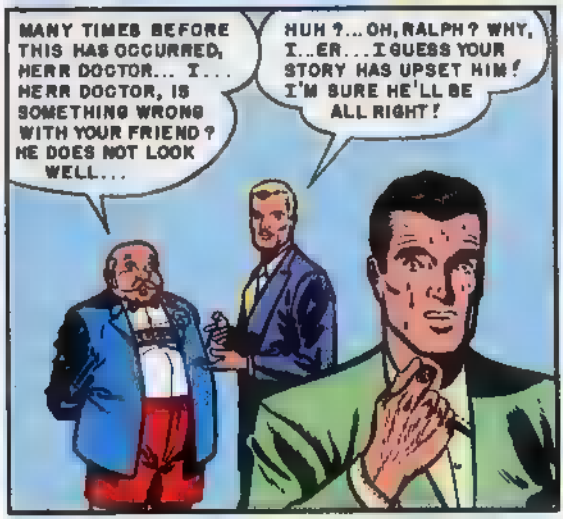

RALPH! WHAT HAPPENED?
OH, NOTHING...JUST SCRATCHED MYSELF ON ONE OF THE BRANCHES OF THIS BUSH! NOTHING SERIOUS, THOUGH! A LITTLE IODINE WILL FIX ME UP!

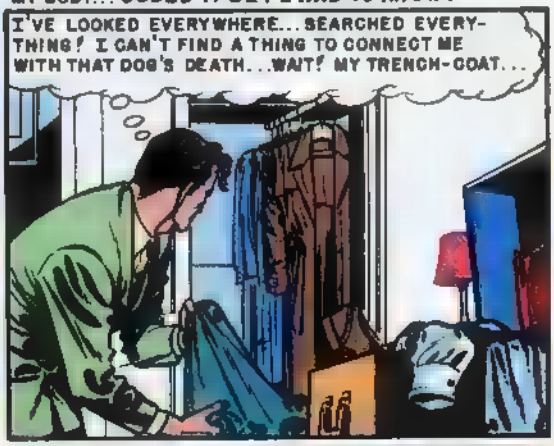

"WE THOUGHT LITTLE OF THE EVENT AND RETURNED TO THE INN. AFTER A GLORIOUS DINNER WE RETIRED TO THE ROOM WE SHARED AND WENT TO BED. THAT WAS MY LAST RESTFUL NIGHT, GEORGE... FOR AS WE DESCENDED FROM OUR ROOM THE NEXT MORNING, WE FOUND THE INN A HUBBUB OF EXCITEMENT... AND FEAR!"
HOW HORRIBLE!
PERHAPS NEXT TIME IT WILL BE ONE OF US!
WHAT'S ALL THE COMMOTION ABOUT, DESK CLERK?
OH, IT IS TERRIBLE! THIS MORNING THE INNKEEPER FOUND ONE OF HIS DOGS TORN TO SHREDS! THE TOWNSPEOPLE THINK IT IS THE WORK OF A WEREWOLF! OH, WHY ARE WE PLAGUED LIKE THIS?

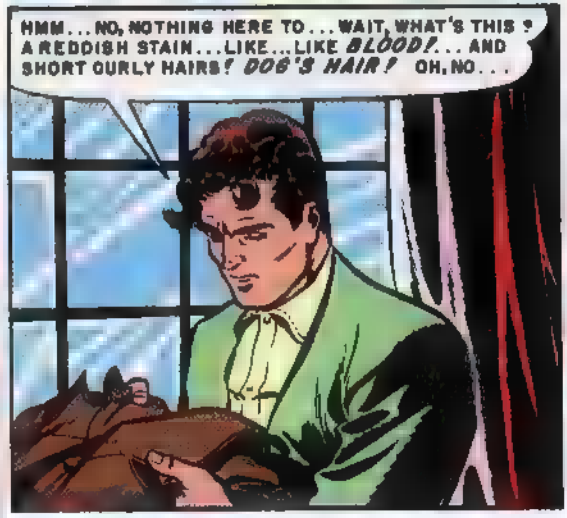
WEREWOLF? WHY, THAT'S NONSENSE!
NOT NONSENSE, HERR DOCTOR! IT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE! COME, I WILL EXPLAIN...

THE WOODS SURROUNDING THIS VILLAGE ARE INFESTED WITH A WILD PLANT CALLED WOLFS-BANE! LEGEND SAYS THAT ANYONE WHO TOUCHES IT WILL TURN INTO A WOLF ON THE NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON... LAST NIGHT, THE MOON WAS FULL!

SEE...HERE, IN THIS BOOK, IS A PICTURE OF THE PLANT OF WHICH I SPEAK! WE HAVE NOT DESTROYED IT BECAUSE NO ONE WILL GO NEAR IT...
ULP! WHY, THAT'S THE SAME PLANT I SCRATCHED MY.
OH, NO!


MANY TIMES BEFORE THIS HAS OCCURRED, HERR DOCTOR... I... HERR DOCTOR, IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR FRIEND? HE DOES NOT LOOK WELL...
HUH?...OH, RALPH? WHY, I...ER...I GUESS YOUR STORY HAS UPSET HIM! I'M SURE HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT!

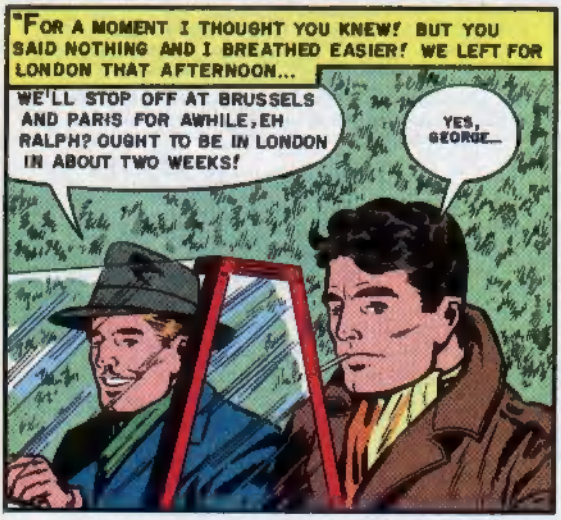

"I CLIMBED THE STAIRS TO OUR ROOM, GEORGE, IN A TRANCE... DROPLETS OF COLD SWEAT BEADED MY BODY... COULD IT BE? I HAD TO KNOW!"
I'VE LOOKED EVERYWHERE...SEARCHED EVERYTHING! I CAN'T FIND A THING TO CONNECT ME WITH THAT DOG'S DEATH...WAIT! MY TRENCH-COAT...


HMM...NO, NOTHING HERE TO...WAIT, WHAT'S THIS? A REDDISH STAIN...LIKE...LIKE BLOOD!...AND SHORT CURLY HAIRS! DOG'S HAIR! OH, NO...

THIS...THIS MEANS... I AM A WEREWOLF! I AM! I AM!

I MUST KEEP CALM... THINK! GOT TO REMOVE THESE STAINS! WASH THEM AWAY... GOT TO...

RALPH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU ALL RIGHT?
WHA-? OH... ER, YES... YES, GEORGE, I'M FINE... JUST WASHING SOME... ER... SOME DIRT OFF MY COAT!


"FOR A MOMENT I THOUGHT YOU KNEW! BUT YOU SAID NOTHING AND I BREATHED EASIER! WE LEFT FOR LONDON THAT AFTERNOON...
WE'LL STOP OFF AT BRUSSELS AND PARIS FOR AWHILE, EH RALPH? OUGHT TO BE IN LONDON IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS!
YES, GEORGE...

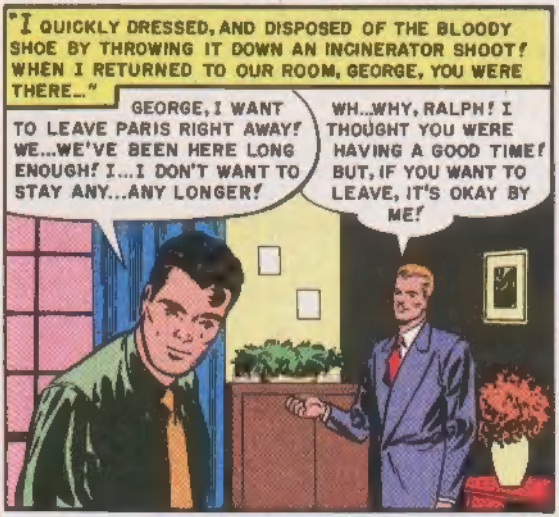
"BUT YOU WERE WRONG, GEORGE! IN TWO WEEKS, WE HAD ONLY REACHED PARIS!
HURRY UP, RALPH! GOT A BIG NIGHT OF FUN AHEAD! WE'RE GOING TO SEE THE FOLIES BERGERE...
OKAY, GEORGE... BE WITH YOU IN A MINUTE!

"GAY, EXCITING PARIS! THE THRILLING, PULSATING NIGHT LIFE, COUPLED WITH THE WINE AND CAREFREE ATMOSPHERE INDUCED US TO PROLONG OUR STAY...

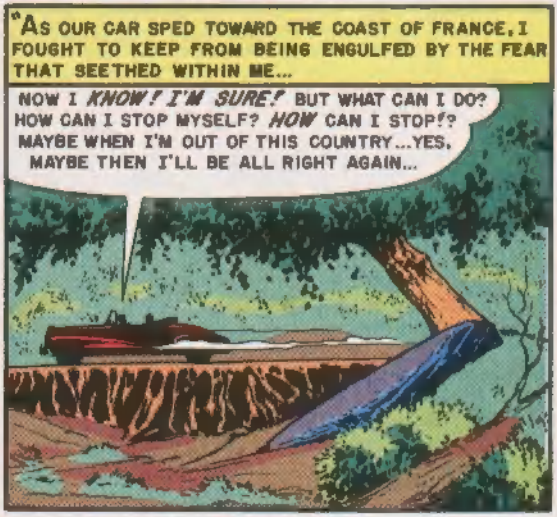
"MY FEARS HAD ALMOST DISAPPEARED... ALMOST, BUT NOT QUITE! FOR SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER A RAGING WEREWOLF ROAMED THE STREETS...

"I AWOKE THE NEXT DAY TO FACE THE SHOCKING FACTS OF THE GLARING MORNING HEADLINES..."

"I QUICKLY DRESSED, AND DISPOSED OF THE BLOODY SHOE BY THROWING IT DOWN AN INCINERATOR SHOOT! WHEN I RETURNED TO OUR ROOM, GEORGE, YOU WERE THERE..."



"AS OUR CAR SPED TOWARD THE COAST OF FRANCE, I FOUGHT TO KEEP FROM BEING ENGULFED BY THE FEAR THAT SEETHED WITHIN ME...



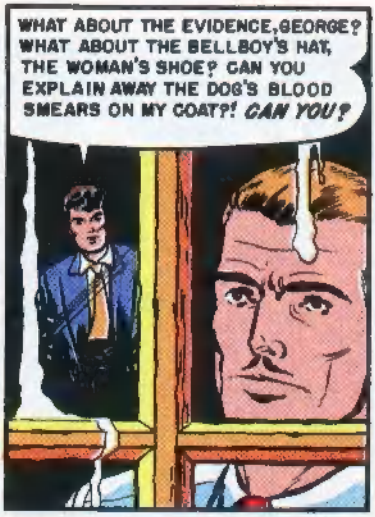
"AT LE HAVRE, WE HAD TO WAIT TILL THE FOLLOWING DAY BEFORE BOARDING A SHIP TO CROSS THE CHANNEL TO ENGLAND. BUT EVEN WITH PARIS FAR BEHIND, I WAS AFRAID. LONDON WAS SMOTHERED IN FOG WHEN WE ARRIVED THAT NIGHT... AND MIST GLISTENED ON THE PAVEMENTS OF THE QUIET STREETS...

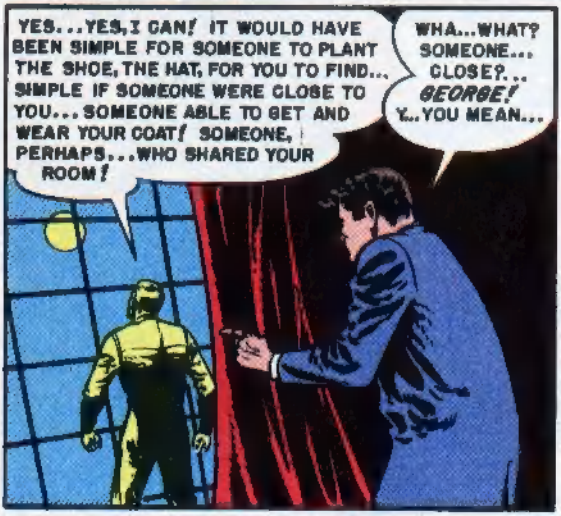
"TIME INCHED ITS WAY ACROSS THE CALENDAR AND THE WEEKS PASSED QUIETLY...QUIETLY...UNTIL A FEW DAYS BEFORE WE WERE TO SAIL! FOR IT WAS A NIGHT OF A FULL MOON... AND THE *WEREWOLF* STALKED AGAIN!"

"AND AS USUAL, THE SAME SHOCKING FEAR COURSED THROUGH ME AS I LEARNED OF THE TERRIBLE INCIDENT THE FOLLOWING MORNING..."
EARLY THIS MORNING, POLICE FOUND THE HORRIBLY TORN AND MUTILATED BODY OF ANTHONY ESSEX, BELLBOY OF THE LONDON SQUARE HOTEL...
...POLICE ARE SPECULATING ON THE THEORY THAT THIS MAY BE THE WORK OF ANOTHER "JACK THE RIPPER"! THE BELLBOY WAS STILL IN HIS WORK UNIFORM WHEN FOUND, AND ONLY HIS HAT IS MISSING! NO CLUES HAVE...
CLICK!
"I DREADED WHAT I KNEW I WOULD FIND... PROOF ONCE AGAIN THAT I HAD KILLED! I FOUND IT IN MY COAT POCKET... THE CRUMPLED, BLOODSTAINED BELLBOY'S HAT!"
...AND THAT'S MY STORY, GEORGE! WE SAILED SEVERAL DAYS LATER AND DOCKED HERE IN NEW YORK ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO! NOW YOU KNOW WHY I'VE COME TO YOU, GEORGE! THIS IS THE NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON... AND I'M TERRIFIED!
YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME THIS BEFORE, RALPH! BUT, IT'S NOT TOO LATE... YOU SEE, THIS IS ALL IN YOUR MIND! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO PHYSICALLY TURN INTO A WOLF! YOU MERELY THINK THAT!
I... I DO?
CERTAINLY! THE BELIEF THAT PEOPLE CAN ASSUME THE APPEARANCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A WOLF IS AN ANCIENT ONE! BUT, BELIEVE ME, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE! TRUE, TALES OF LYCANTHROPY OCCUR EVEN TODAY IN SAVAGE OR SEMI-CIVILIZED RACES, BUT IT IS NOW REGARDED AS A FORM OF INSANITY! AND IT IS CHARACTERIZED BY ABNORMAL DESIRES FOR CERTAIN FOODS INCLUDING HUMAN FLESH!
YOU... YOU'RE SAYING I'M... I'M NOT A WEREWOLF?... BUT... BUT THAT I'M... I'M INSANE?!

RALPH, MY BOY, YOU'RE *NOT* A WEREWOLF... AND YOU'RE *NOT* INSANE!
GEORGE... I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND... I... I...

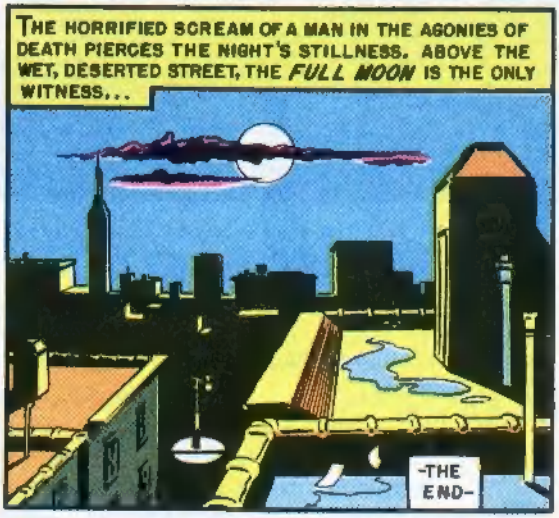
LOOK OUT THE WINDOW! DOES THE MOON HAVE ANY AFFECT ON YOU?! DOES IT? *DOES IT?*
N... NO... NO, GEORGE! I... I FEEL PERFECTLY NORMAL... BUT... BUT...


WHAT ABOUT THE EVIDENCE, GEORGE? WHAT ABOUT THE BELLBOY'S HAT, THE WOMAN'S SHOE? CAN YOU EXPLAIN AWAY THE DOG'S BLOOD SMEARS ON MY COAT?! *CAN YOU?*


YES... YES, I CAN! IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SIMPLE FOR SOMEONE TO PLANT THE SHOE, THE HAT, FOR YOU TO FIND... SIMPLE IF SOMEONE WERE CLOSE TO YOU... SOMEONE ABLE TO GET AND WEAR YOUR COAT! SOMEONE, PERHAPS... WHO SHARED YOUR ROOM!
WHA... WHAT? SOMEONE... CLOSE?... *GEORGE!* Y... YOU MEAN...

YES, RALPH, YES! I'M THE WEREWOLF! I KILLED THOSE PEOPLE! I DID IT!

... AND NOW I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!!


THE HORRIFIED SCREAM OF A MAN IN THE AGONIES OF DEATH PIERCES THE NIGHT'S STILLNESS. ABOVE THE WET, DESERTED STREET, THE *FULL MOON* IS THE ONLY WITNESS...
-THE END-